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EPA Proposes to Approve Dallas/Fort Worth Area Clean Air Plan

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposes to approve the clean air plan for the Dallas/Fort Worth area and invites the public to comment prior to EPA's final action. The plan, formally known as the ozone State Implementation Plan or SIP, details how the Dallas/Fort Worth area will ensure it meets the national health-based air quality standard for ozone by 2007.

“We congratulate everyone, including individuals, business and industry leaders and government officials who worked to accomplish this first step in providing cleaner air for the Dallas/Fort Worth area.

Once again, the Dallas/Fort Worth clean air plan shows air pollution does not recognize jurisdictional boundaries. Throughout its development, EPA continued to work closely with state, local officials, business, industry and organizations in identifying air pollution controls to help Dallas/Fort Worth meet the national health-based standard for ozone. New programs such as incentive-based measures and energy-efficiency measures to be considered during the next legislative session could provide greater flexibility for the Dallas/Fort Worth plan,” EPA Regional Administrator Gregg Cooke said.

Dallas/Fort Worth's plan includes a range of actions to reduce air pollution focusing on local and regional controls and a mid-course review in May 2004 to assess how controls are working and make revisions if needed. The plan proposes 15 new rules (or 9 rulemaking packages) which require public comment and final action by EPA.

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission Commissioner R. B. "Ralph" Marquez said, “While implementation of the plan will proceed as scheduled, we will continue to work with our partners at the federal and local level to come up with better ways to meet the air quality standards.”

The Dallas/Fort Worth clean air plan recognizes the impact of ozone traveling from the Houston/Galveston area to other areas in the state. As a result of the impact of ozone from Houston, EPA has given the Dallas/Fort Worth area the same clean air attainment date as the Houston/Galveston area.

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Collin County Judge Ron Harris said, "This plan is a result of partnerships to clean up the air based on today's technologies. We are pleased to be able to present a proposed approved SIP as the 77th legislature convenes to ask for support and for incentives to speed up technology changes to more quickly attain the national clean air standard for both health and economic benefits for north Texas. These clean air measures will benefit us today and be our legacy for future generations."

A 60-day public comment period will begin after EPA's proposed approval is printed in the Federal Register. The clean air plan is available at <http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/news>

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